

JOHN ALEX McCONE

John Alex McCone was born in San Francisco on 4 January 1902. His father's family had been in the mining and machinery business in Nevada and California since 1860. His mother was the former Margaret Enright, of San Jose, California. He attended the public schools in Los Angeles, and the University of California at Berkeley, and was graduated in 1922 with the B. S. degree in engineering, magna cum laude. Mr. McCone and Miss Rosemary Cooper, of Nez Perce, Idaho, were married on 21 June 1938. They maintained homes in San Marino, California, and in Washington, D. C., until her sudden death on 6 December 1961.

Mr. McCone began his industrial career in 1922 as a riveter in the boiler shop of the Llewellyn Iron Works in Los Angeles. In subsequent years with that firm he worked as surveyor with its construction gangs and foreman of its steel erector crews, and at the age of 26 he became construction manager. In 1929, when the Llewellyn firm was merged with others into the Consolidated Steel Corporation, he joined the new firm and served successively in various executive positions, including construction manager, vice president in charge of sales, and (from 1933 on) executive vice president and director. Among his major projects at Consolidated was one to provide steel work for the Boulder Dam, being built for the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation by the "Six Companies" consortium.

In 1937 Mr. McCone left the steel business to join Stephen D. Bechtel in organizing a new engineering firm, the Bechtel-McCone-Parsons Corporation, in Los Angeles. This firm, later renamed the Bechtel-McCone

Corporation, specialized in the design and construction of petroleum refineries, processing plants, and power plants, for installation throughout the United States, in South America, and in the Persian Gulf area. Late in 1939, at the outbreak of war in Europe, with various business associates, Mr. McCone joined the "Six Companies" group in forming the Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Corporation. They built merchant ships, first for the U. S. Maritime Commission and later for the British government.

In the nation's war production effort during World War II Mr. McCone and his enterprises participated extensively. He assisted in the establishment of the California Shipbuilding Corporation, and served as its president and the general manager of its Terminal Island shipyard at Los Angeles. It became one of the nation's principal wartime shipyards for the construction of cargo vessels, tankers, and troop transports. Through the Bechtel-McCone Corporation he built and managed the Air Force's Modification Center in Birmingham, Ala., where B-24 and B-29 bomber aircraft were specially fitted for combat. Through an affiliate, Pacific Tankers, Inc., and in cooperation with the Standard Oil Company of California, he operated an extensive fleet of oil tankers for the U. S. Navy in the Pacific. He also served as director of the Marinship Corporation at Sausalito, California, and of the Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation.

After the war, under Mr. McCone's leadership the Bechtel-McCone Corporation took over the Joshua Hendy Iron Works at Sunnyvale, Calif., producers of heavy machinery and equipment such as ship propulsion units, reduction gears, and reclamation equipment. Subsequently, under Mr. McCone's presidency, the Hendy firm (eventually renamed the Joshua

Hendy Corporation) re-directed its efforts to overseas shipping, particularly the ore-carrying trade in South America and, through its Pacific Tankers Division, the operation of a fleet of oil tankers in the Pacific. In another venture, in 1945, Mr. McCone and his associates formed the Pacific Far East Line for cargo trade with Japan, the Philippines, and China.

Mr. McCone has also served on the boards of other enterprises, including the following: Curtiss-Wright Corporation; Crocker-Wheeler Electrical Manufacturing Company; California Bank of Los Angeles; Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company; Industrial Indemnity Company; Standard Oil Company of California; Western Banking Corporation; Founders Fire and Marine Insurance Company; and Trans-World Airlines.

Mr. McCone's official service with the U. S. Government dates from the fall of 1947, when he was appointed by President Truman as a member of the President's Air Policy Commission, of which Thomas K. Finletter was chairman. In that position Mr. McCone helped to formulate the military-preparedness aspects of the Commission's report, "Survival in the Air Age," issued on 1 January 1948. From March to November 1948 he served as Special Deputy to Secretary of Defense James V. Forrestal, and handled the preparation of the first two budgets of the newly established Department of Defense. In May 1950 he was appointed Under Secretary of the Air Force, with special responsibilities for the aircraft procurement program and the construction of overseas bases, including the planning of the base complexes at Thule, Greenland, and in North Africa. Upon his resignation in October 1951 to return to private life, Mr. McCone was presented the Exceptional Civilian Service

Approved For Release 2004/03/25 : CIA-RDP64B00346R000400040008-0

Award, which cited him for his part in the doubling of American military aircraft production during that critical year of the Korean War.

During President Eisenhower's administration Mr. McCone served in a number of capacities. In 1954 he was a member of Secretary of State Dulles's Public Committee on Personnel (the Wriston Committee), which was concerned with increasing the effectiveness of the career services of the Department of State, both in Washington and abroad. On 6 June 1958 President Eisenhower nominated him for a five-year term as a member of the United States Atomic Energy Commission. The nomination was approved by the U. S. Senate on 9 July, and on 14 July 1958 he took office and was designated as Chairman of the Commission. He served until the close of President Eisenhower's administration in January 1961, when he resigned to return to private life.

Mr. McCone has participated in a number of civic, philanthropic, and educational activities over the years. He has been a director of the Stanford Research Institute, a trustee of the California Institute of Technology, a regent of the Loyola University (Los Angeles), and was one of the founders and first president of the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, established in 1954. In 1955 Pope Pius XII made Mr. McCone a Knight of St. Gregory, and in 1956 awarded him the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Sylvester. In March 1956 Mr. McCone served as President Eisenhower's Personal Representative to the Vatican at the Pope's 80th birthday celebration, and in 1958, with Secretary of State Dulles and Mrs. Clare Boothe Luce, represented the President at the funeral of Pope Pius XII.

Mr. McCone holds honorary degrees from many universities including the University of California, Notre Dame University, Fordham University, Clarkson College of Technology, and the Catholic University of America.

Mr. McCone entered on duty as Director of Central Intelligence under a recess appointment on 29 November 1961.